

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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EXECUTIVE ORDER 08-02

EXTENDING THE STATE BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, Washington's natural environment sustains the state's rich web of life and supports vital natural resource industries that produce food, fiber, fuel, building materials and medicines. Washington's forests support a timber industry that employs thousands of people. Its lands produce a rich and abundant agricultural economy that is a breadbasket of the nation. Its fresh and marine waters support commercial and recreational fishing and shellfish industries. The state's biodiversity heritage draws outdoor recreationists and tourists who help support our local economies; and

WHEREAS, Washington risks losing much of its rich natural diversity due to habitat fragmentation, degradation and conversion to other land uses. Threats to species and critical ecosystems have resulted in endangered species listings, which can disrupt communities and long-term resource management. Decisions we make today affect Washington's biodiversity for our children and all future generations of Washingtonians; and

WHEREAS, the Biodiversity Council (Council) has written the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (Strategy), which articulates a comprehensive guide to effectively conserving the state's biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, the Strategy identifies a Conservation Opportunity Framework that holds great promise for incorporating biodiversity protection within a multitude of programs including land use planning; landowner conservation incentives and assistance programs; and a host of existing federal, state, and local conservation funding programs; and

WHEREAS, the Council developed the Strategy collaboratively with stakeholders and took into account the needs of communities and working landowners; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 04-02, which created the Council, expired by its terms on December 31, 2007, and there exists strong momentum to move forward. As a result, an entity is needed to guide and coordinate implementation of the Strategy and to monitor the results;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Christine O. Gregoire, Governor of the state of Washington declare that the State Biodiversity Council be continued by this Executive Order to ensure implementation of the State Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

The Council shall:

- Generally operate under the procedures it previously adopted pursuant to Executive Order 04-02, or as subsequently amended by the Council under this Executive Order.
- Consist of no more than 24 members appointed by the Governor representing the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Ecology, the Department of Natural Resources, the Puget Sound Partnership, the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Transportation, the Conservation Commission, the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, local government, federal agencies, tribal governments, private landowners, academia, educators, non-governmental organizations and at-large members.
- The Council may reimburse travel and meeting expenses to non-governmental members at the discretion of the Council. The Recreation and Conservation Office shall administer all contracts and expenses for the Council.

By December 31, 2009, the Council shall complete the following tasks:

- Coordinate implementation of early action items from the Strategy to the extent possible based on available funding and other support, paying particular attention to demonstrating the utility of the Strategy's Conservation Opportunity Framework.
- Develop a proposal that recommends a structure to provide on-going leadership and accountability for implementation of the Strategy. The proposal should specifically include how the Strategy will serve as an organizing principle for natural resource agencies. It should also include how it will build on the efforts of federal, state, regional, tribal, local and private initiatives including, but not limited to, the Puget Sound Partnership, the Climate Advisory Team, the Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group and the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. The proposed approach, including any recommendations for legislation or funding, shall be provided to the Governor and the Legislature by November 1, 2008.
- Conduct outreach activities on the findings and recommendations of the Strategy to stakeholder groups and interested parties.
- Maintain the Biodiversity Project Website to ensure it continues to serve as a state hub for biodiversity information, resources and data.
- Seek creative funding opportunities from partnerships created by the Council.

If funding is secured, the Council will perform these additional tasks:

- Implement regional pilot projects to demonstrate how the Strategy can be applied at a regional level to guide investments on the ground and to coordinate conservation efforts.

- Direct the creation of a science-based Biodiversity Scorecard to provide a baseline measure of the health of Washington's biodiversity resources.
- Track how funding and land use decisions affect biodiversity over time.
- Ensure the work on monitoring is coordinated with other monitoring forums in the region, such as those for salmon recovery and watershed health.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and expire on June 30, 2010, or at such earlier time if a permanent leadership entity is identified to support the Council and continue guiding and coordinating the implementation of the Strategy and monitoring the results.

Signed and sealed with the official seal of the state of Washington, on this 6th day of March 2008, at Olympia, Washington.

By:

/s/

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

BY THE GOVERNOR:

/s/

Secretary of State